found in the forest of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh where it w found in small quantities in the forests. Kuth in wild is endangered and hence it i_s placed in Appendix I of the Convention of International Trade in [Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and schedule VI of Wild life (Protection) Act, 1972. Kuth of cultivated origin is placed in Appendix II of CITES, thereby making its export much easier. However, keeping the endangered status of Wild Kuth in view, there i_s no proposal under consideration in this Ministry to declare Ruth as an agricultural .produce.

U. S. stand on Kashmir

*95. SHRI SUKOMAL SEN:
SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) wheiher Government ar_e aware of the recent statement of Ms. Robin Raphel, a senior American official questioning the vilidity of the Kashmir ac. cession to India;

(b) if so, whether it is a deliberate move ^o pressurise India on various issues of critical concern to India which US has been raking $_0$f late; and

(c) if so, what is the reaction of Government there lo and how does the shift in US policy towards India affect Indo-US relations?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS fSHRI R. L. BHATIA): (a) At a background briefing to South Asian journalists on October 28, 1993 at the Foreign Press Centre in Washington, US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Robin Raphel called into question the status of Kashmir. She stated that the US Government did not recognise the Instrument of Accession and regarded the whole of Jammu and Kashmir a_s disputed territory the status of which remains to be resolved. She questioned the effectiveness of the Simla Agreement in resolving the Kashmir dispute and downplayed Pakistan's role in supporting terrorism in India.

(b) Government have noted that under the Clinton Administration, the United States foreign policy agenda is dominated by issues relating to non-proliferation, trade, human rights and regional con flicts and there has been a consequent sharpening of differences in perceptions and positions on some of these issues. USG's policy towards the Kashmir issue has been seen to have evolved gradually since 1947 to the most recent reiteration that "for more than four decades the consistent US position has been that the former princely, state of Jammu and Kashmir is disputed territory" and that "the US view is that negotiations between Governments of India and Pakis tan, as envisaged by Simla Agreement, pgtovide best means for resolving dispute over Kashmir. As a practical matter, US believes this process of bilateral ne. gotiatron needs to take into account wishes of Kashmiri people." Government constantly monitor all developments haying a bearing on India's vital inte rests. Negative assertions regarding the status of Jammu and Kashmir only strengthen Government's resolve to de fend India's territorial unity and integ rity-

(c) It would be unrealistic to expect total harmony in relations between the world's two largest democracies. Notwith standing the differences, Indo-relations have witnessed systematic improvement in interaction in the economic and com mercial spheres with the US remaining by far our largest trading partner, the biggest source for foreign direct invest ment and an important source' of high technology. Government are com mitted to a policy which seeks to ad dress the negative agenda of our rela tions with the US through a process of constructive dialogue, builds in the posi tive aspects of interaction in the econo. mic and commercial spheres but remains vigilant against any threat to India's basic national interests. Government are pursuing a policy of considered and constructive dialogue with the US keeping India's national interest as the sol_e determinant factor.